Keeping in Touch

News and notes from
the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.

JULY, 1991

MCC-NY Feeds The Hungry and Homeless

By Rev. Kittredge Cherry

MCC New York feeds between 1,200 and 1,700 hungry men, women and children every month.

"My understanding of church is that we're called to feed the hungry and shelter the homeless, bind up the brokenhearted, preach good news and bring healing --- and we're called to do it in very hands-on ways," said Rev. Pat Bumgardner, pastor of MCC-NY.

Acts of Compassion

She herself is following that call in a very hands-on way. At least three days a week she joins church secretary Timothy Leetch and a variety of volunteers in distributing groceries to people in need. Only a few of MCC-NY's 106 members are directly involved in distributing the food, but many contribute food, funds, and prayers. The program is also funded by grants and donations from the community.

The feeding program began about seven years ago as a vision developed by the MCC-NY congregation at a church retreat, Rev. Bumgardner said. With the help of grant money, the church began offering a bag of groceries to the first 200 people in line on Thursday mornings.

Later they added special programs that provide the homeless with easy-to-prepare food, and PWAs with high-nutrition food and seating while in line.

Not everyone has welcomed the feeding program. Neighbors complained because "it didn't beautify the neighborhood," Rev. Bumgardner said. They began to support the program when the head of a community board discovered a recently widowed friend standing in line for food.

Rev. Pat Bumgardner hands groceries to the hungry

"Lesbian and gay people have been less supportive," she said. The feeding program operates out of the church office, which is located in New York's Lesbian and Gay Community Service Center. MCC-NY had to fight with the center before PWAs were allowed to come in and sit while they waited for food. During the dispute, Rev. Bumgardner was asked, "Are you feeding gay people or straight people?" Her reply: "I'm feeding hungry people."

MCC-NY's gift of food is accompanied by a clear message that it is a church of the lesbian and gay community, open to all. Homophobic remarks (there have been only three since the program began) are confronted with information and a reminder that anyone who has a problem with lesbian and gay people need not accept the food.

"In terms of hunger in New York City, you could say we're putting a Band-Aid on a major wound," Rev. Bumgardner said. "But I look at it like the multiplication of the loaves and the fishes: God takes what we can offer and multiplies it."

If you want to start a feeding program: "It's actually not that difficult to get off the ground," Rev. Bumgardner said. She can be reached for advice on getting started at MCC-NY, 208 W. 13th St., New York, NY 10011. Phone: (212) 242-1212. ❐

July is for General Conference

Approximately 1,200 UFMCC clergy and lay leaders will be in Phoenix, July 14-21 for General Conference XV. A full report on the conference will be presented in the August issue of *Keeping in Touch.*

Introducing a New Look for Keeping in Touch

From the Editorial Board

With this issue, *Keeping in Touch* introduces a new look designed to better serve you, our readers.

UFMCC has responded to the needs of our members by putting more resources into planning and producing a monthly journal that presents a current and balanced picture of what is happening throughout UFMCC today. Rev. Kittredge Cherry has been hired to serve as *Keeping in Touch* editor, and the latest desktop publishing technology has been purchased. We are grateful to all of the countless people who have contributed their time, talent and treasure to the improvement of *Keeping in Touch.*

A variety of regular features will be running on a monthly, bimonthly or quarterly basis, starting with this issue. These include: Acts of Compassion, People of UFMCC, Celebrating Our Diversity, Building Our Foundation, Human Rights Achievement, Idea Bulletin Board, and Q & A. As in this issue, we will feature occasional cartoons by Ms. Jean Gralley, a professional illustrator and member of MCC Detroit.

The editorial board consists of Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry, moderator; Mr. Ravi Verma, director of administration; and Rev. Cherry, editor. We are developing an editorial policy for presentation to the General Council this October.

Here are a few suggestions to help our readers make the most of every issue of *Keeping in Touch:*

▼ Make photocopies of *Keeping in Touch* and distribute them in church to UFMCC members and friends.

▼ Post *Keeping in Touch* on your church bulletin board.

▼ Keep a file of back issues of *Keeping in Touch* for reference.

▼ Reprint articles from *Keeping in Touch* in your church newsletter or Sunday bulletin.

{Please give us credit by marking such articles "from *Keeping in Touch.*"}

Keeping in Touch is distributed free of charge to about 1,600 UFMCC clergy, board members and lay delegates. It is also increasingly used to introduce UFMCC to lesbian and gay organizations, other churches, and members of the press. We are always looking for ways to serve you better, so we look forward to hearing what you think. ❐

Prayers

✧May God bless **General Conference XV** this month in Phoenix and direct our work there. May we receive the spirit, vision and strength to guide us toward the 21st century, and know the joy of sharing Christ's message.

✧**Ken Rogers**' father, **Arthur "Arch" Rogers**, died suddenly on June 16. Ken Rogers is the lay representative for the European North Sea District, and treasurer for the outreach ministries of that district.

✧**Rev. June Norris**, pastor of Church of the Holy Spirit MCC in Des Moines, IA, learned after attending District Conference in late May that her 26-year-old grandson committed suicide over marital problems.

✧**Rev. Jodi Safier**, pastor of Maranatha MCC in San Lorenzo, CA, suffered a stroke in early June. Within a week, she was at home recuperating.

✧**The International Lesbian and Gay Association** (ILGA) annual conference in Guadalajara, Mexico, has been cancelled due to difficulties with the local government. At publication, discussion was underway about possible alternate meetings. ❐

Thank You for a New Computer System!

A special thanks to Michael Dively, whose recent donation of $5,000 enabled UFMCC to buy the computer system that produced this issue of *Keeping in Touch.* Mr. Dively is a member of MCC Key West, FL. The purchase of the computer system was also funded by a special offering collected at the General Council meeting in March.

"I am pleased to be able to do this because I see the computer system as really enhancing our ability to communicate," Mr. Dively said. "I hope my contribution will encourage others to assist the Fellowship. Those who can afford to give their time should give their time, and those who can afford to give financially should assist in that way."

UFMCC will continue using this new system to produce *Keeping in Touch,* as well as *ALERT* and the many reports and brochures compiled at the Fellowship offices.

The truth is UFMCC's office equipment has not been as up-to-date as our theology. UFMCC still needs more computer equipment and software before we can efficiently meet the demand for top quality printed materials. A detailed plan for upgrading our entire computer system has been completed, but we still lack the funds to make it a reality. Contributions may be sent to: UFMCC Computer Fund, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 304, Los Angeles, CA 90029. ❐

Keeping in Touch is a monthly publication of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. We are a church of the lesbian and gay community, open to all. Our mission is to call people to new life through the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ, confront injustice through Christian social action, and create a community of healing and reconciliation.

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Send address changes, news and ideas to: *Keeping in Touch*, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd, #304, Los Angeles, CA 90029; (213) 464-5100.

Editorial Board:
Rev. Elder Troy Perry, Moderator
Mr. Ravi Verma, Director of Administration
Rev. Kittredge Cherry, Editor

Deadline for August Issue: July 22
Ms. Nancy Fackrell, Typesetting

Rev. Troy Perry, founder of UFMCC, and Rechal Longman, one of the youngest members of MCC-LA ,share a tender moment as each of them looks for their own mother's name on the Memorial Wall. {Photo by: Tri Tran Photography}

Memorial Wall Dedicated

The dedication of the memorial wall at MCC Los Angeles was held Sunday, May 19, 1991. The Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson, pastor, officiated.

"The memorial wall has become our way of experiencing the communion of saints every time we enter the sanctuary...it is a wonderful healing reminder," says Rev. Wilson.

The memorial wall is a mosaic of granite and marble in three sizes and seven colors. The names are sandblasted into the stone and are gold filled.

UFMCC leaders memorialized include Rev. Elder James Sandmire; Dr. Gary McClelland, member of the Samaritan College Board of Trustees; Rev. Bern David; Rev. Sandy Taylor, who pastored MCC Louisville, KY; Ms. Edith Perry, mother of UFMCC founder Troy Perry; and Ms. Kerry Brown, a lay leader.

For more information, Mike Steen may be contacted at MCC LA, 5879 Washington Blvd., Culver City, CA 90232. ❐

Praises

✧Countless **UFMCC churches** celebrated Gay and Lesbian Pride in June by marching in parades, holding special worship services, and organizing a wide variety of other events to commemorate the Stonewall Riots in 1969.

✧**ICM Buenos Aires** organized a successful ecumenical AIDS service on Memorial Day at the chapel of ISEDET, an ecumenical seminary in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Representatives attended from the Episcopal, Presbyterian and Methodist churches. Student clergy **Fabiana Tron** preached and **Rev. Roberto Gonzalez** presided. Rev. Gonzalez is UFMCC church extension coordinator for South Amercia.

✧**MCC Richmond, VA**, received its UFMCC charter, effective June 9. The church is pastored by **Rev. Arthur Runyan**.

✧**Rev. Christine Oscar** is recovering well from surgery. Rev. Oscar is pastor of **St. Mary's MCC** in Greensboro, NC.

✧The AIDS Crisis Fund of **MCC Dallas** received a $5,000 grant from Design Industries for AIDS (DIFFA). This is the second year in a row that the church received a grant from DIFFA. The AIDS Crisis Fund is used by the church to help persons with HIV disease pay for daily living expenses.

✧**MCC of the Blue Ridge** in Roanoke, VA, received a special commendation for the spiritual and financial support it has given to PWAs in the Roanoke Valley at the second annual Roanoke AIDS Project Awards Banquet May 21. **Rev. Thomas Bohache**, pastor of the church, was also recently accepted into the doctoral program in the Religious Studies Department of the University of Virginia in Charlottesville.

✧**Ms. Janice Skaggs**, pastor of **MCC Waco**, has been an active member of the Waco Ministerial Alliance. As a member of the group's Task Force to Heal Racism and Sexism Within Our Own Congregations, she helped coordinate an interfaith picnic/singspiration service in the park May 26. More than 200 people from 10 to 15 churches attended.

✧**Phillip E. Eberle** graduated from the certificate program of New York Theological Seminary on May 19. Mr. Eberle has served as co-pastor of Trinity MCC in New York City and MCC Springfield MA, and has served on the Northeast District Committee. He is presently a member of MCC Brooklyn.

✧**Rev. Brad Wishon**, pastor of **MCC of Greater St. Louis**, will be honored during Gay and Lesbian Pride Week with the Fifth Annual Felton T. Day Memorial Award for community service and individual commitment.

✧**MCC Windsor** received its first deacon, **Ms. Diane Skomash**, in a ceremony conducted by **Rev. Don McRae**, pastor, on May 5, with 40 in attendance. Rev. McRae and his spouse, **Mr. Tony Dias**, celebrated their Holy Union on June 22 with the **Rev. Clarence Crossman** officiating.

✧**Rev. Steven Torrence**, pastor, and **Rev. Tyrone Sweeting**, assistant pastor, along with the entire congregation of **MCC Key West** celebrated the church's 11th anniversary on June 2 with special worship services. MCC Key West has undertaken many new ministries recently, most notably a new Lay Shepherd program that promises to expand and revitalize the church's pastoral care services. ❐

Q & A

District Coordinators were asked: "What is your favorite hymn and why?" A sampling of answers:

▼People say that "Trust and Obey" must be my favorite hymn because all my sermons in one way or another relate to the words to that hymn. I guess it's true that everyone has just one sermon in them! I don't recognize it myself, but people have often kidded me about it, so I guess I should say that's my favorite hymn. ~ Rev. Tom Bigelow, Southeast District.

▼"For Those Tears I Died" is the hymn that has haunted me throughout the growth of my ministry. It was the first song I heard after I was baptized about 22 years ago, and Marsha Stevens was singing it. She didn't know me and I didn't know her, but we belonged to the same huge Foursquare church in Costa Mesa, CA. She had just recorded the song that week. Then 15 years ago I found out that Marsha had joined MCC. I almost lost it! It was an incredible revelation. ~Rev. Bonnie Daniel, Mid-Central District.

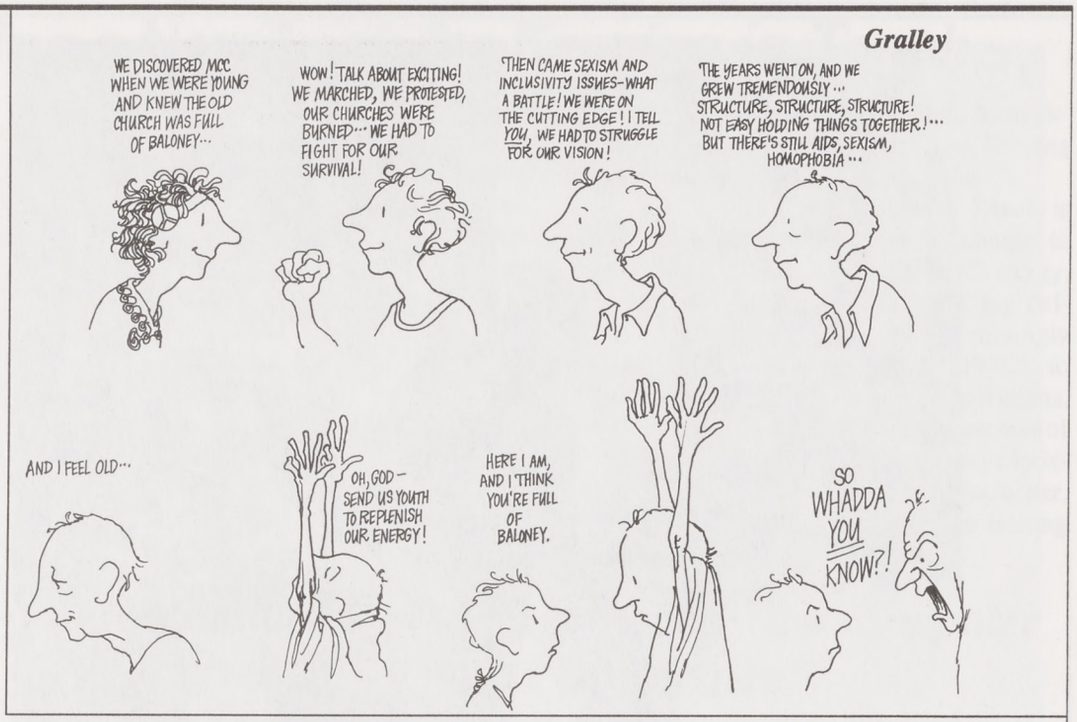
▼My favorite hymn is "Seek Ye First" because it's contemporary and it really speaks to my faith journey. I really like the way it sounds when a lot of people sing it with harmony and descant. "Amazing Grace" is my old favorite from years back, and I also really like "We Are the Church Alive" because it has great words, great music, and it's an MCC hymn written by an MCCer. ~ Mr. Adam DeBaugh, Mid-Atlantic District.

▼For a long time my favorite hymn was "For Those Tears I Died" because it was Christ speaking directly to me, saying, "I'm here for you, not just for everyone else, but you." I don't think I have a favorite hymn right now, probably because I'm in transition. ~Rev. Bev Baptiste Western Canadian District.

▼I have two favorites: "It is Well With My Soul" - simply because that's the reality. It is the style of music I grew up with and it has a sense of power and a militant approach. The other one is one that we never sing. It's a hymn that I grew up with called "Ich Veis Einen Stromm." Literally that means "I Know A Stream," but it loses about 90% in English translation. It's a beautiful song that talks about the heavenly waters that invite us, cleanse us, and bring us on to a life of purity and flowing connection with God. The words are very apt, and the hymn connects me with my (German) roots. ~ Mr. Clarke Friesen, South Central District.

▼I have two favorite hymns: "Amazing Grace" because it's amazing to me what grace God brought down to Jesus so we could have all we have today. And "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms" because there are times when I need to lean and I know my Savior is always there and I can lean on Jesus. I like it when people lock their arms together and lean as they sing it. The opening words also remind me of who we are: "What a Fellowship!" ~Rev. Ed Sherriff, Northwest District.

▼"The Prayer of St. Francis" is my favorite hymn because it talks about the way we ought to live: "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace." That was one of the songs that we used at our Holy Union. ~ Ms. Judy Dale, Great Lakes District. ❐


Gralley
WE DISCOVERED MCC WHEN WE WERE YOUNG AND KNEW THE OLD CHURCH WAS FULL OF BALONEY...
WOW! TALK ABOUT EXCITING! WE MARCHED, WE PROTESTED, OUR CHURCHES WERE BURNED... WE HAD TO FIGHT FOR OUR SURVIVAL!
THEN CAME SEXISM AND INCLUSIVITY ISSUES-WHAT A BATTLE! WE WERE ON THE CUTTING EDGE!! TELL YOU, WE HAD TO STRUGGLE FOR OUR VISION!
THE YEARS WENT ON, AND WE GREW TREMENDOUSLY... STRUCTURE, STRUCTURE, STRUCTURE! NOT EASY HOLDING THINGS TOGETHER!... BUT THERE'S STILL AIDS, SEXISM, HOMOPHOBIA...
AND I FEEL OLD...
OH, GOD - SEND US YOUTH TO REPLENISH OUR ENERGY!
HERE I AM, AND I THINK YOU'RE FULL OF BALONEY.
SO WHADDA YOU KNOW?!

UFMCC Makes Headline

"Church for Gays Alters Mainline Religions' Views," said the front-page headline of an article about UFMCC in *The Los Angeles Times,* June 7.

This was a major article that gave a fair and accurate survey of the entire history of UFMCC and its continuing impact on the mainline denominations that are currently wrestling with questions of homosexuality. The story has been picked up by the wire services and may have appeared in other locations, too.

UFMCC has also been in the news in other ways. Several churches (and the Fellowship office staff) reported being flooded with calls after Rev. Steve Pieters, AIDS Ministry Field Director, appeared on "Real Life with Jane Pauley" June 2. A videotape of the program will be available at Conference.

The Denver Post also featured MCC of the Rockies on the cover of its Sunday magazine May 19 with the headline, "An Open Door: MCC of the Rockies on Capitol Hill is a conventional Christian congregation in every respect but one: most of its members are gay and lesbian. Belonging to a church that offers a comfortable place to worship is a unique experience for most in the assembly."

Members of MCC in the Rockies are very pleased with the article, which includes a color photo of Rev. Elder Charlie Arehart, pastor, standing in front of a stained glass window. On the cover is a photo of Rev. Dusty Pruitt, pastor of MCC Long Beach.❐

UFMCC Has Ecumenical Impact

By Rev. Kittredge Cherry

Tears mixed with triumph for lesbians, gay men, and our supporters at the Presbyterian General Assembly in Baltimore in early June.

I represented UFMCC at the annual convention, where Presbyterians debated and then rejected a controversial sexuality report that offered a new sexual ethic affirming lesbian and gay lifestyles. The report said that "the moral norm for Christians ought not to be marriage but rather justice-love," which it defined as "right-relatedness with self and others."

Defeat of the report can only be seen as a blow to the gay and lesbian community, but I also saw the following signs of hope and resurrection:

▼ Lesbians, gay men and our supporters protested the final vote with a powerful demonstration. Several hundred of us walked silently through the assembly hall carrying an eight-foot wooden cross. When we reached the podium, we broke the silence by hammering nails into the cross. Then we sang "The Song to Remember Harvey Milk." Members of Presbyterians for Lesbian and Gay Concerns (PLGC) told me that previous defeats had left them feeling crushed, but this time they responded by joining together to express both anger and self-respect.

▼ PLGC members said UFMCC's presence gave them strength and courage. Everywhere I went, I ran into colleagues I met at the World Council of Churches Assembly in Australia earlier this year. I was introduced as the official ecumenical representative from UFMCC and invited to speak at several occasions. I was overwhelmed by the gratitude and warmth shown to me by countless lesbian and gay Presbyterians who told me over and over, "It really makes a difference to have MCC here."

▼ Presbyterian officials also treated me as an honored guest -- much better than they treated their own lesbian and gay members. I arrvied uncertain about whether I would have any official status, and was promptly informed that as an "Ecumenical Representative" I would receive many privileges, including free meals and lodging (at the Hyatt Regency!) I got to introduce myself and UFMCC at the ecumenical dinner. I experienced the sharpest contrast of the assembly when I walked past an angry crowd of protesters handing out leaflets about "the ominous rise of homosexual power" and then immediately processed into the ecumenical worship service with archbishops and other visiting dignitaries to the tune of "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty."

Earlier that same week, Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson and I attended the first meeting of the new National Council of Churches/UFMCC Dialogue Committee. The committee recognized that this is a "historical moment" when churches must face gay and lesbian issues -- and that UFMCC can bring wisdom and healing to the entire Christian community. We began planning a series of dialogues between UFMCC and NCC member churches at the local, regional and national levels. The committee will report at the NCC General board meeting in Indianapolis November 13-15.

Rev. Willem Hein, coordinator of church extension in New Zealand, also broke new ecumenical ground recently by attending the first National Gay Christian Conference in New Zealand. There were 119 people registered, with more than 300 attending the opening and Sunday night services. UFMCC was involved at every level: presenting workshops, providing brochures, planning, and participating in worship. About 10% of registrants were MCCers. ❐

Top Twenty: May, 1991

Per Capita

1	MCC Ottawa	Ontario, Canada	$92.17
2	MCC of the Redwoods	Larkspur, CA	76.00
3	New Life MCC	Berkeley, CA	47.09
4	MCC Calgary	Alberta, Canada	39.41
5	MCC of Northern Virginia	Falls Church, VA	30.96
6	MCC of the Disciples	Washington, DC	29.49
7	New Covenant MCC	Walnut, CA	27.41
8	Resurrection Chapel MCC	Torrence, CA	27.27
9	Calvary MCC	Redwood City, CA	25.57
10	MCC North Pines	Yelm, WA	24.76
11	Faith Eternal MCC	Springfield, IL	24.61
12	MCC in the Country	Spring Valley, CA	24.19
13	Christ the Redeemer MCC	Evanston, IL	22.74
14	MCC Rockville	Rockville, MD	22.26
15	Eternal Light MCC	Lacy, WA	21.91
16	MCC Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh, PA	21.59
17	Whitewater Valley MCC	Richmond, IN	21.38
18	Christ the King MCC	Oklahoma City, OK	21.08
19	Vision of Hope MCC	Lancaster, PA	21.04
20	Christos MCC, Toronto	Ontario, Canada	20.50

Top Twenty: May, 1991

Tithes

1	MCC Washington	Washington, DC	$1737.57
2	MCC of the Resurrection	Houston, TX	1715.70
3	Church/Holy Spirit MCC	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	1700.63
4	MCC San Francisco	San Francisco, CA	1582.40
5	MCC Long Beach	Long Beach, CA	1445.37
6	MCC Toronto	Ontario, Canada	1399.40
7	MCC San Diego	San Diego, CA	1367.56
8	First MCC of Kansas	Wichita, KS	1204.07
9	King of Peace MCC	St. Petersburg, FL	1070.11
10	MCC in the Valley	N. Hollywood, CA	985.53
11	MCC of Greater Kansas City	Kansas City, MO	837.71
12	Agape MCC of Ft Worth	Ft. Worth, TX	810.65
13	River City MCC	Sacramento, CA	809.94
14	MCC Austin	Austin, TX	787.30
15	St. Luke's MCC	Jacksonville, FL	705.20
16	Faith Eternal MCC	Springfield, IL	699.04
17	Christos MCC, Toronto	Ontario, Canada	684.64
18	MCC New York	New York, NY	631.91
19	Church of the Trinity MCC	Sarasota, FL	600.99
20	MCC Key West	Key West, FL	580.40

Human Rights Award 1979 - 1991

UFMCC has a tradition of honoring human rights achievement by presenting the Human Rights Award at General Conference. This year's award will be presented at the Human Rights Banquet, Saturday night, July 20 to Jane Cary Peck, professor and National Council of Churches leader, for challenging injustices in the Church. Here is a list of the recipients of the Human Rights Award:

1979: Midge Costanza, assistant to the President of the United States, for organizing a meeting of gay and lesbian leaders and President Carter.
1981: The Unitarian Universalist Association, for providing worship space for many UFMCC churches.
1983: George Hislop, pioneer of the lesbian and gay rights movement in Canada.
1985: Bishop Melvin Wheatley and Mrs. Lucille Wheatley, for speaking out for gay men, lesbians, and their families and friends.
1987: Phil Donohue and Marlo Thomas, television personalities, for providing public education on lesbian and gay issues.
1989: John Boswell, author and professor, for his books on the history of Christianity and homosexuality. ❐

New Pastors

MCC Hawaii now has a full-time pastor, **Mr. Jon Bullock**.

Ms. Patricia Jackson has become pastor of **Sweet Spirit MCC** in Salem Oregon. ❐

New Churches Start

New UFMCC churches have started recently in East London, England, and in North Chicago, Illinois.

MCC North London has founded the East London church as a parish extension. The new church is located in London's poorest district, with many immigrant communities mixed with some wealthy "yuppies." Andy Braunston, coordinator of the parish extension group, said, "We also have, in East London, an active and lively lesbian and gay scene which the new church is seeking to network into." The group began holding public worship in May and had between nine and 11 people, all male, in attendance.

Joy of Life MCC has begun meeting in North Chicago. Fourteen people attended the church's first worship service, and they will continue meeting twice monthly through the summer. Rev. Bob Hogg is senior pastor and Mr. Peter Trabaris is associate pastor. ❐

Christos MCC of Toronto, Ontario, Canada gave $20.49 per capita in March 91. They were omitted from the Top 20 list. ❐

Pastoral Search

MCC Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada is seeking a part-time pastor for its present congregation of approximately 30 people. They are seven years old as a congregation and look forward to mobilizing the many talented people in their midst toward a fuller spread of Christian salvation, community and social action in their city of 500,000 people.

For further information please write to: Pastoral Search Committee, Box 26091 Westminster P.O.; 116 Sherbrook St.; Winnipeg, MB; Canada, R3C 4K9. ❐

Schaller To Speak At UFMCC Conference

With more than 1 million copies of his books in print, Lyle E. Schaller has been called "America's foremost authority on the dynamics of church life" by *Leadership* magazine. Dr. Schaller will be the featured guest speaker at the 1992 UFMCC Church Leadership Conference, August 25-27 in Phoenix, AZ. This conference, open to clergy and church lay leaders, will focus on issues of local church development including growth, structure and management. During this unique opportunity to hear one of today's leading church development experts, Dr. Schaller will bring his current insights on contemporary trends affecting churches.

Following the Church Leadership Conference, the UFMCC's Department of People of Color will host its 6th biennial Conference on August 28-30 at the same location. The DPOC Conference will include extensive programs for White People Healing Racism, as well as featured speakers and workshops on leadership issues for People of Color.

More details on both conferences will be reported in future issues of *"Keeping in Touch."* ❐

Tampa Passes Gay and Lesbian Rights Law

The City Council of Tampa, FL, voted 4-3 on May 28 to approve a human rights law prohibiting discrimination against gay men and lesbians in employment, real estate and public accommodations. The Hillsborough County Commissioners voted only to prohibit such discrimination in real estate and public accommodations.

In addition to her duties as pastor of MCC Tampa, Rev. Karen Ducham is also co-moderator of the Human Rights Ordinance Task Force. Individuals in the congregation have also supported the new human rights ordinance. Many hours of hard work and prayer led to passage of the law, and more prayers are requested for the future.

The first gay and lesbian rights rally in Tampa was organized by Rev. Lee Carlton, who is now pastor of Holy Cross MCC in Pensacola, FL. ❐